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Cathaoirleach Of Limerick County Council Bemoans Lack Of Respect For National Flag

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Councillor Kevin Sheahan said that guidelines for use of the Irish Tricolour, issued by the Department of the Taoiseach, were being contravened because many people were unaware of their existence.

He explained, "It saddens me to see so many examples of our National Flag being disrespected. Such examples are visible all throughout the country and include the flag being displayed in the open after sunset and the hoisting of a flag that is worn or frayed."

"I am aware that observance of the guidelines is a matter for each individual because there are no statutory requirements. However, it is only reasonable to expect that the National Flag would be treated at all times with appropriate respect by those who use it", added Councillor Sheahan.

The protocol for the flying of the flag contains 23 guidelines relating to its display, placing and precedence. Among them is the ruling that the National Flag is displayed in the open only between sunrise and sunset, except on the occasion of public meetings, processions, or funerals, when it may be displayed for the duration of such functions.

"This is one guideline that is commonly disregarded, whether it be unintentionally or knowingly", stated Councillor Sheahan.

The Cathaoirleach continued, "Should you drive through any village or town in Ireland after sunset you will see incidences of the Irish National Flag being displayed. Furthermore, flags that have been erected to celebrate sports events, National Holidays, festivals and commemorations, often remain attached to buildings and other structures for weeks on end. It is especially disheartening to see the National Flag touching the ground, trailing in water or becoming entangled in trees or other obstacles."

Councillor Sheahan said that the Government should consider developing a media campaign aimed at educating Irish citizens about the guidelines and the importance of respecting the National Flag.

He added that the Department of Education and Science should also contemplate ways of educating children about the guidelines.

"There is no doubting the patriotism of Irish people at home and abroad when it comes to celebrating their nationality. However, it is disappointing to hear visitors to Ireland comment about the many examples of disrespect for the National Flag. I would appeal to people to view the guidelines for displaying the Irish Tricolour on the Office of An Taoiseach's website", concluded Councillor Sheahan.

-ENDS-

Note to Editor:

- Councillor Kevin Sheahan (087-2926333), Cathaoirleach of Limerick County Council, is available for interview.

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